

**FEATURING BEST PRACTICES
OF STATE AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**Pesticide - Knowledge Automated Testing System
(P-KATS)**

**Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
implemented this best practice
in March 1999**

*Qualifying under the
Best Practices catalogue*

3 Provide Capabilities
31 Manage resources and capabilities
312 Deliver products and services to customers

**Best Practice Summary
(how it works, how you measure it)**

On October 31, 1999, there were 9,707 certified commercial pesticide applicators in Virginia. Applicants for certification as commercial pesticide applicators in Virginia may now take required certification examinations at one of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) customer centers that routinely administer driver tests. Twenty-two pesticide applicator certification examinations have been automated and established on individual test workstations at more than 70 Department of Motor Vehicles customer service centers throughout the Commonwealth. In the process of converting the old paper-based examinations to a computer-based system, each examination was updated and improved with enhanced graphics. If an applicant achieves a passing score of 76% on the required examinations, they may begin to work independently immediately.

Impact on the Process Organizational Performance (OUTCOMES)

Customer Service Enhancements:

With P-KATS

1. Over 70 Testing sites
2. Testing 5 1/2 days a week
3. Immediate certification
4. Applicator can immediately assume the role of license applicator upon passing examination.

Before P-KATS

- 11 testing sites
- Infrequent testing (monthly or weekly)
- 20 day wait for certification
- Applicator had to be supervised until certification was received.

Efficiency Enhancements:

With P-KATS

1. Automated Testing
2. Enhanced examination and graphics
3. Less time to take exams
4. Staff is used for more progressive purposes
5. More efficient use of DMV hardware
6. Automated item analysis of test items

Before P-KATS

- Manual test scoring
- Outdated questions and poor graphics
- More time-intensive exams
- Staff resources were used to administer test and manually grade
- Some idle time on DMV testing hardware
- Limited item analysis

Best Practice Qualification

Customer acceptance has been exceptionally high. Virginia is the first state to have implemented an automated testing system for the certification of pesticide applicators. Several other states have expressed an interest in such a system and at least two states have followed Virginia's lead and are now developing their own automated testing system. EPA Region III recently awarded the staff of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services "*The Partnership In Environmental Protection Medal*," in recognition of P-KATS.

For Additional Information

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